

REMARKS

The present Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed August 3, 2007.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-26 were rejected as set forth hereinbelow.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 21-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,398,629 to Wasenius. The claims in the present application have been amended in a manner which is believed to overcome the rejection over the Wasenius '629 patent.

In particular, the Wasenius patent relates to the transportation of oil utilizing a vessel which allows gases, and possibly liquid as well, to expand into a trunk space positioned above the tank. The trunk, in turn, is connected to a pipe arrangement for receiving redistributing liquid and possibly gases by way of the pipelines. One disadvantage of the arrangement disclosed in Wasenius is that should liquid collect in a section of the pipe arrangement, i.e., an elbow or the like, it may cause overpressurization from the resulting blockage. On the other hand, the system disclosed and claimed in the present application allows gases and liquids to always seek their natural level - gas on top, with liquid underneath. Thus, the system of the present application prevents any entrapment of liquids and is operable by way of an expansion trunk individually associated with a respective tank therebelow, the trunk not being associated with any pipelines to receive fluids from the tank other than the pipeline included only for venting of the tank.

In alternative embodiments of the present invention, multiple trunks may be used to vent a particular tank.

It is respectfully submitted that the Claims 1, 2, 6, and 21-25 as amended clearly distinguish the present invention over the Wasenius patent.

In the Office Action, Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 1,085,086 to Jack. It is respectfully submitted that the Jack '086 patent neither discloses nor suggests a marine vessel having tanks which have associated therewith, at least one separate and

individual expansion trunk in fluid-tight relation therewith and being provided with a vented pipeline as disclosed and claimed and recited in the claims as amended herein.

In the Office Action, Claims 3-5, 7-13, 16-20 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,398,629 to Wasenius. The remarks presented hereinabove with respect to the Wasenius '629 patent are repeated herein with respect to the present rejection. In particular, Wasenius neither discloses nor suggests a vessel having a plurality of separate liquid cargo tanks located below the deck tank, with each tank having positioned thereon, at least one separate and individual expansion trunk which is vented, and which is not associated with any pipeline to receive fluids from the tank other than a venting pipeline.

In the Office Action, Claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,398,629 to Wasenius, in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,006,740 to Butterworth.

The remarks presented hereinabove with respect to the Wasenius '629 patent are repeated with respect to the present rejection.

The Butterworth '740 patent relates to a method of cleaning, scaling and gas freeing bulk cargo tanks of tank vessels comprising heating a cleaning liquid and directing the liquid and its streams with force against the sides and the bottom walls of the tanks, and simultaneously removing the used liquid at a rate to maintain the bottom walls free of liquid and in condition to be cleaned by the same operation.

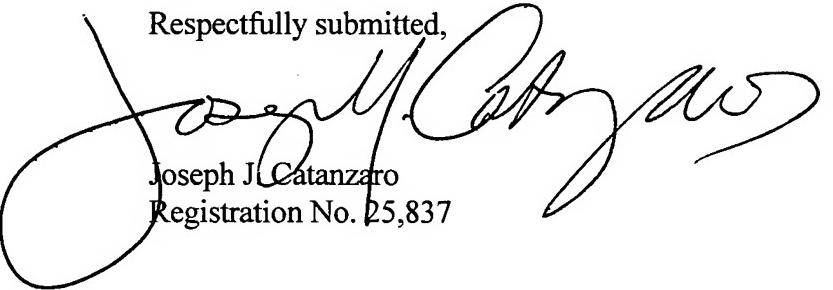
The Butterworth process limits the tank to gas and liquids resulting from tank cleaning operations as compared to the purpose of the tanks according to the present invention. Moreover, the Butterworth process reduces the internal capacity of the vessel, while the present invention increases the internal capacity. The present invention is not related at all to tank cleaning or related improvements.

Claim 14 depends from Claim 9 and Claim 15 depends from Claim 14. In view of the amendment of Claim 9 presented herein, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 14 and 15

respectively recite the invention in a patentable manner. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of Claims 14 and 15 is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the patents cited and applied in the Office Action disclose or suggest the present invention as claimed in the claims as amended herein, alone or in combination with themselves or with the remaining art of record. Allowance of the Claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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